

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services	<b>Effective Date:</b> September 1, 2019
	<b>Section 46:</b> Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Process	<b>Version:</b> 2

#### STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

*This policy does not pertain to concerns regarding licensing. For concerns regarding licensing see [Chapter 12 Foster Family Home Licensing](#). For concerns regarding per diems see Policy [8.50 Determining and Reviewing Category of Supervision](#). For concerns regarding adoption assistance see Policy [10.20 Administrative Review for Adoption Assistance](#).*

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) recognizes the rights of each resource parent. DCS will respect and support resource parents and recognize them as a partner. The complaint resolution process is designed to give resource parents recourse when there is a disagreement with decisions made. DCS and resource parents, working together, may build and support a safe environment in which appropriate information will be shared and valued.

In the event of a disagreement with the assigned DCS employee that cannot be resolved, resource parents may initiate the complaint resolution process. See [Procedure](#) and [Practice Guidance](#) for more information.

#### Code References

N/A

#### PROCEDURE

The complaint resolution process is as follows:

1. The resource parent contacts the Family Case Manager (FCM), Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS), or Relative Specialist to discuss concerns he or she may have with decisions made regarding the child's case;

**Exception:** If the resource parent is licensed through a Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), the resource parent must begin the complaint resolution process by contacting the DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison via [fostercare support@dcs.in.gov](mailto:fostercare support@dcs.in.gov).

2. The resource parent then contacts the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist's immediate supervisor if he or she continues to have concerns after the discussion with the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist. It is recommended the resource parent contact the immediate supervisor within five (5) calendar days of the discussion with the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist;
3. The resource parent then contacts the DCS Local Office Director (LOD) or designee if concerns were not able to be addressed by the immediate supervisor. It is recommended the resource parent contact the LOD or designee within five (5) calendar

days of the response from the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist's immediate supervisor; and

4. When the complaint resolution process has been exhausted and concerns remain unresolved, the resource parent may submit the [Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Form](#) via online submission (See [Practice Guidance](#) for more information).

**Note:** Court orders and rulings will take precedence over any attempt to resolve the complaint.

The FCM, RFCS, and Relative Specialist will:

1. Provide all notifications to the resource parent in a timely manner;
2. Discuss any concerns with the resource parent as they arise; and
3. Inform his or her immediate supervisor of any discussions that occurred regarding the resource parent's concerns and subsequently document the conversation in the case management system.
4. Ensure other DCS staff working with the child are aware of the identified concerns and actions taken.

The FCM, RFCS, and Relative Specialist's immediate supervisor will:

1. Discuss upon request of the resource parent, either by telephone or in person, concerns he or she has raised;
2. Determine if the original decision was made in the best interest of the child and recognized the rights of each resource parent;
3. Notify the resource parent via e-mail or written correspondence and notify the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist, within five (5) business days of the decision; and
4. Notify the LOD of the discussion held with the resource parent and the decision reached, and subsequently document the conversation in the case management system.

**Note:** If the original decision is changed or modified, the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist's immediate supervisor should notify the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist with instructions for further action.

The LOD or designee will:

1. Discuss upon request of the resource parent, either by telephone or in person, concerns he or she has raised about the decision reached by the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist's immediate supervisor;
2. Determine if the decision made was in the best interest of the child and recognized the rights of each resource parent;
3. Discuss the concerns and determination with the RM; and
4. Notify the resource parent via e-mail or written correspondence and notify the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist and the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist's immediate supervisor within five (5) business days of the decision.

**Note:** If the original decision is changed or modified, the LOD should notify the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist's immediate supervisor with instructions for further action by the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist.

The DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison will:

1. Review the [Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Form](#) submitted online by the resource parent;

**Note:** If the complaint is from an LCPA, the DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison will review the submitted email referenced in the complaint resolution process [Exception](#) above and will respond with further guidance.

2. Clarify information with the appropriate parties involved, if necessary;
3. Collaborate with the LOD and RM to coordinate a meeting with the appropriate parties;
4. Collaborate with all appropriate parties to attempt to resolve the complaint while recognizing the rights of each resource parent;
5. Notify the resource parent via e-mail or written correspondence of the final decision made within 10 business days of receiving the request or completion of the meeting, whichever occurs later.

**Note:** The LOD and RM will be copied on this correspondence.

## **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

### **Communication with the Resource Parent**

DCS staff should seek and consider input from the resource parent before making final decisions concerning the care and well-being of children who are in his or her care. The FCM, RFCS, and Relative Specialist should encourage the resource parent to provide input regarding the child and any possible concerns during Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings, Case Plan Conferences, and during their routine face-to-face, telephonic, or e-mail communications.

### **DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison**

The role of the DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison is to help facilitate grievances from the resource parent as they relate to the FCM, RFCS, or Relative Specialist. The DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison reviews the [Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Form](#) submitted by the resource parent and works with all parties to facilitate an appropriate resolution, while supporting the best interest of the child and the rights of the resource parent.

Although the resource parent is instructed to contact the DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison as part of the complaint resolution process, DCS staff may also contact the DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison for guidance. The DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison may be reached at [fostercare support@dcs.in.gov](mailto:fostercare support@dcs.in.gov).

## **FORMS AND TOOLS**

[Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Form](#)

## **RELATED INFORMATION**

N/A